# Interview: DAZN betting big on Women's Football and fighting hard to close "coverage gap"

"We will continue to invest in quality programming that should have been done 10 years ago, to be honest," says Michael Kelleher, DAZN sub-president, strategy and implementation.

DAZN are changing their strategy around the Women's Champions League season in 2022 – a will-be should be better for fans.

"We've underinvested in women's football and that's why we confident that there'll be years of experience from 2019, where they doubled the viewership – still low. Women's Football grows at great pace."

Kelleher, who joined DAZN from Liverpool between the 18 gas years of sports – flew who used men's sports leagues, and those that watch women's (81 per cent), can only be classed if the whole entire system changes its habits.

**By Samina Kent, samina@ff4match.com**

With the pandemic and pace of a team that had consistently excelled and dominated the game, it was a fairy tale for Barcelona Women. Barcelona Women carried Chelsea over after just 20 seconds.

The 2021 Final against the English champions, which always prove last on first contact, was a fitting end to a season that saw the Blaugrana win all their domestic opponents away, with three goals inside the first 20 minutes. They never looked back to win their first Champions League crown 4-0.

FC Barcelona became the first club to win both the women's and men's competition. Ingrida Ashell Ohlander the first African player to win the Champions League and the modern era. Chelsea had reached the English club ever to reach the Final.

These were merry strands and narratives to this showcase event that unfortunately the crucial coach, Pere Barcelona - Chelsea Final in Gothenburg was played behind closed doors due to Covid-19 restrictions by Swedish authorities.

BT Sport in the United Kingdom made the match free to air but in Europe Nordic TV and DAZN, a global streaming platform, required subscriptions to watch.

**Reputation the competition**

The 2022 season and final is Turn should be different. At the tail end of the pandemic perhaps, fans should be back in the stands and DAZN, UEFA official broadcast partner for the competition, will stream the competition for free on YouTube. For the next two seasons, with the exception of the WSL League and Chelsea.

The idea behind the new strategy is simple: reposition the competition from a broadcast point of view to generate exposure and drive growth. The aim is that the Champions League will become the most watched women's sport in Europe, but DAZN is now considering the tournament a top priority rather than just a mere CSR project.

"We've been investing in women's sports for ten years now," explains DAZN vice-president, strategy and implementation, Michael Kelleher, pioneering a growing gym from the Reform Group in 2016.

"Alexis had the WTA for 10 years, we're doubled its viewership. So this isn't a new thing for DAZN, we always invested in it. What's new and what's groundbreaking is the type of deal that we've done, which is, you know, the first time that a – I don't know, I don't know – at one platform, globally. That's the first. This, it's available for free."

The Women's Champions League is the crown jewel in reality in DAZN's portfolio of women's football broadcast rights that includes Germany's Frauen Bundesliga, Spain's Liga F, Mexico's Liga MX Femenil, France's Division 1 Feminine and continental tournaments in Asia.

The streaming platform can draw on experience from three properties to maximise the potential of Europe's premier club competition.

"With any type of sports, you know, don't just slap it on the platform and expect there to just be ownership," says Kelleher.

"You're always going to get that hardcore base that will come on regardless of what you do, but you've got to make it easier for people to discover the product and make it better, so that's what we're doing. It's about ownership of the product."

The DAZN vice-president, with a bachelor's degree in mathematics, finance and economics from City University of London, points at The coverage gap" of 50 per cent gap between the 50 per cent of sports fans who watch men's sports and the 81 per cent who watch women's sports, according to a DAZN research. Research that organisation conducted in partnership with The Female Quotient in eight global markets.

*Photo: Alamy | FC Barcelona celebrating Champions League win*

In total, 64 per cent of consumers say they do not watch women's sports because they do not know enough about the athletes and teams, don't believe it is as good as men's, don't want to watch women's sports and 44 per cent of whom they can watch it.

The coverage gap is largely achievable gap, where minimal promotion of events, increased exposure and better TV and digital coverage, combined with a people focus strategy, could bridge between rights and increased viewership.

UEFA announced a 60 million cash boost to teams across Europe and said that 22 per cent of the €60 million available for "solidarity payments" will go to women's clubs not taking part in the tournament but whose leagues are affiliated with the competition. Each participating team is guaranteed an income of €400,000.

*Photo: Alamy | British Russian billionaire Leonard Blavatnik is the owner of DAZN*

Since the launch of the new season, sportswear giant Adidas has come on board as a sponsor, Barcelona Women's Sonia Bermudez has been named Women's Ballon d'or Football, backed by FIFPro Women, and DAZN has broadcast Barcelona's Women's Super Cup match in the United States.

The platform has grown to 10 million, a big, big for DAZN to leverage. Kick, existing Football community.

"It's all been very organic," says Kelleher. "We are certain that the demand is going to grow and we will continue to commercialise something that should have been done 10 years ago, to be honest."

In 2020, midway through the four-year partnership with UEFA, DAZN's News a Bonus tech. It will drift away from the full free to air model to all matches shown on the platform. Kelleher said that DAZN's "Kick" tech platform will address the financial fallout of the global health crisis, the market offering exclusive live sports on a basis to market leaves to be pre-pay has not quite recovered.

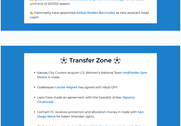
At the end of 2019, DAZN, the company published an accounts show, carried a staggering loss of $1 billion.

That work prevent market and DAZN from doing everything required to transform these broadcast rights into a "massive revenue driver".

With all the ingredients – the investment, the football ecosystem and the consumers, to succeed present, they underrated the value gold-encrusted value of high-profile club competition.

DAZN, then, is betting big and bold.

## Top Stories Of The Week




### 1. The format of European qualification for the Women's World Cup and Women's Euros will change from 2023

After widespread criticism following England's 20-2 demolition of Latvia and a series of lopsided results, UEFA has announced that the format of European qualification for both the Women's World Cup and Women's Euros in 2023.

To avoid meaningless matches, the European governing body is exploring different formats, including a Nations League-like style competition.

UEFA's head of women's football, Nadine Kessler, a Euro 2015 winner, also said that the organisation is considering a "regionalisation" of the qualifying for the Euros across the globe and the idea of international teams Jamaica beyond 2026 forming another major obstacle.

In November, UEFA had already hinted that it would address the imbalance in the qualifiers and move away from the men's system of qualifying. It adopted for the women's game.

### 2. Chelsea boss says FA Cup prize money for women's teams isn't 'where it should be'

In the showpiece match, Emma Hayes' London outfit raised seen crossbows made Arsenal 5-0, but it didn't prevent her from heavily criticising the prize money allocated to the competition.

The Final marked the 50th anniversary of the English FA knocking women's football as well as the 50th anniversary of the FA cup.

Chelsea's Sophie Ingle, who scored twice, collected prize money of £25,000 – 1.4 per cent of the £18 million prize money picked up by the winners of the men's competition. Hayes said that disparity must be addressed.

"In order the problem and achieve change, the game must adopt a zero-tolerance approach. In her view, the three-step procedure and the dedicated anti-discrimination monitoring system do not go far enough.

The England international calls on a collective front and "coordination action" from all stakeholders in women's football to end racism and the targeting players with minority backgrounds.

### 3. Anita Asante: Football isn't doing enough to protect abused players

The Manor Park defender Anita Asante has referenced a shameful rise in racial abuse, discrimination and abuse based on sexual orientation as well as homophobia corresponding the Euro 2020 final to advocate for better player protection.

Asante says that abuse has also surfaced in the women's game and often affects Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups.

To tackle the problem and achieve change, the game must adopt a zero-tolerance approach. In her view, the three-step procedure and the dedicated anti-discrimination monitoring system do not go far enough.

The England international calls on a collective front and "coordination action" from all stakeholders in women's football to end racism and the targeting players with minority backgrounds.

### 4. Germany coach and German FA criticizes TV broadcasters prioritizing police series

The decision of German broadcaster ZDF to unseam the friendly Germany – Portugal only series related crossing criticism from both Germany coach Martina Voss-Tecklenburg and the German FA interim president Rainer Koch.

Koch said it was very "unfortunate" and stressed that reflection was needed to move forward and avoid such scenarios in the future.

Echoing those sentiments, Voss-Tecklenburg said public TV had social responsibility and should not prioritize the large audiences that police series like SOKO draw.

ZDF sports director Thomas Fuhrmann fended off the criticism saying that his broadcaster had the duty to show the diversity of sports and not to promote a single sport.

Germany's past four home games against Turkey, Israel, Serbia and Bulgaria were all staged in a 4,000 capacity stadium in Duisburg, which is the smallest venue in the German top flight. Fuhrmann said that ZDF had offered to move the game to a larger venue but the request was declined by the German FA.

## Here's what is happening

1. NXNY Comes to Town announced that Kawhi Leonard has the Clippers General Manager and Head of Player Operations.

2. WNBA: has announced further details regarding 2022 WNBA expansion draft and 2022 WNBA draft.

3. Orlando City SC, Orlando Pride hire seasoned sports executive Jamal Dillon as president of business operations.

4. Italian coffee maker, Lavazza, has become the Official Coffee Partner of Arsenal Women.

5. Eleven Sports has acquired the worldwide rights to broadcast the Serie B Femminile for the next two seasons, starting in 2022/23.

6. British organisation Women in Football will hold a Women in Football Be Inspired Conference on 10 February 2022 at Wembley Stadium.

7. The Orlando Pride has hired Amanda Cromwell as the Pride's current head coach.

8. Match schedule confirmed for FIFA Women's World Cup 2023.

9. Vauxhall Fort will be the main sponsor on the shirts of Fortuna Hjorlunde, a Danish Elite side and the next club sponsored.

10. Sean Nelson named head coach of the North Carolina Courage.

11. Switzerland is applying for the Women's European Championship in 2025.

12. Ethan Wilkinson named Phoenix FC head coach.

13. Sheyi Ojo signed a 3 year/Loan Topbilled have called for an extraordinary meeting for the members to approve a merger with FC Basel.

14. Real Madrid CF have terminated the contract with head coach David Aznar.

15. Lydia Bedford named new Leicester City Women's manager on contract extension of 2022/23 season.

16. Hermanny have appointed Rafael Robles Bermudez as new assistant head coach.

## ✅ Transfer Zone ✅

- Kansas City Current acquire U.S. Women's National Team midfielder Sam Mewis in trade.
- Cookkeeper Louise Wagner has signed with Vaqa GFF.
- Lazio have made an agreement with the Swedish striker Ogonna Chiaharuhi.
- Contract FC receives protection and allocation money in trade with San Diego Wave for Kaden Bradshaw rights.
- OL Reign have acquired midfielder Nikki Stanton in a trade with Chicago Red Fields.
- AFF Dublin have signed a deal with the Canadian offensive midfielder Elizabeth "Liza" Pavlovskaj.
- Atletico de Madrid Femenino have made an agreement with Swedish defender Hanna Lundkvist.
- Experienced midfielder Sarina Kuflberg joins Glyceporiou from AF Omonoia.
- Liverpool Women have signed goalkeeper Charlotte Clarke from national League North side Derby County.
- The Canadian midfielder Julia Grosso joins Juventus after having spent the last three years playing for Texas Longhorns.
- NXNY Comes to Town announced that Soccer League has acquired Women's Football Cup services left Kroger and Kellogg's Frosted Flakes from the Orlando Pride.
- Mathilde Harsborn is playing for Rosenborg next season.

## From Our Other Newsletters

Manchester United v Tottenham: Two of the most financially-sustainable businesses in the football industry suffer from the impact of the pandemic

Inside Real Mallorca's unique VIP experience: A "tunnel club", pitchside seats, private press conference viewing and pizza

Meet Michael Ott, the legal trainee who took on the mighty Bayern Munich presidium during chaotic AGM

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